

VZCZCXRO2678  
PP RUEHDBU RUEHIK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHBUL #5809/01 3460321  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 120321Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4813  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3369  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KABUL 005809

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, S/CT, SCA/PAB, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
OSD FOR KIMMITT  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, AND POLAD  
RELEASABLE TO NATO/ISAF/AUS/NZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [INR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/KUNDUZ: BAGHLAN GOVERNOR'S BIG TALK NOT YET  
MATCHED BY SUCCESS ON THE GROUND

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Four months into his term as Governor of Baghlan Province, Sayed Ekramuddin Masomi outlined his ongoing plan of engagement with district leaders to stop narcotics-related activities, control corruption, pursue the Disbandment of Armed Groups (DIAG) process, and bring security to his province, as well as to bring government closer to the people to gain their support. Ekramuddin claims to have already made substantial progress, including operations to improve security and the creation of a comprehensive development plan to coordinate and attract more international and GOA assistance to Baghlan. Despite these efforts, Ekramuddin appears still to be struggling for a firm grip on the province, and in particular, on the security challenges that it presents. Although the Governor appears sincerely interested in improving the security and overall development in Baghlan, it is unclear whether he actually has the capacity to do so. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Governor Delineates the Problems...  
-----

12. (SBU) During a meeting with Baghlan Governor Sayed Ekramuddin Masomi on December 3, PRTOff heard the Governor outline his priorities and plans for the province, which paralleled most of the main concerns of the central government and the international community, namely fighting poppy-growing and drug-trafficking; ensuring security for the people of Baghlan; fighting corruption; and supporting the Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG) program.

13. (SBU) Ekramuddin lamented the conflicts and problems he inherited when he became Governor, and said he has been working hard to resolve them. According to Ekramuddin the province, which has an ethnically mixed population of Tajiks, Pashtuns, Hazaras, and others, was badly managed prior to his appointment, with many corrupt individuals in positions of authority. Locals did not like the government because officials were corrupt. In response to this discontent, Ekramuddin said he has focused on working on improving constituent relations to change their views and garner

support for local government.

-----  
... and Outlines his Program of Solutions  
-----

¶4. (SBU) The Governor asserted in the meeting that he was well-known by locals, and that he was intimately familiar with their needs. He said he had already visited eight of the 15 districts in the province, and had met with local authorities and elders to make sure they understood the objectives of the government. He asked the authorities to work for the people, not take bribes, not permit corruption, and not let powerful locals make life difficult for the people. He also asked both the leaders and the people to tell him if they knew of any problems. If they didn't tell him, he stressed, they were at fault for not letting him know how he could improve governance.

¶5. (SBU) Ekramuddin said that he told everyone to let him know if the wrong people were in positions of authority, and he promised to take action to deal with such people. He said he had already fired some District Managers and appointed individuals who could be trusted. He added that he is not receiving support from Kabul for this program. In particular, he blamed the Administrative Secretary for the Ministry of the Interior, Siddiqi, for his failure to get approval for new District Managers. The Governor said he had talked with President Karzai about this. He stressed that he was working hard for the province, and the GOA should support him. Otherwise, he concluded, the central government should send another governor to take his place.

-----  
KABUL 00005809 002 OF 004

Governor Claims Some Success  
-----

¶6. (SBU) The Governor asserted that, due to his efforts, most parts of the province are now under control. He pointed out that recent efforts included a police operation to stop the rampant banditry in the two most difficult districts. The first operation, in Andarab, resulted in the arrest of two murderers and six robbers. One individual was killed trying to escape. A scheduled follow-up operation in Nahrin did not occur because the alleged robbers heard about the successful operation in Andarab and fled. Since then, according to Ekramuddin, Baghlan has been considerably calmer. (Comment: These operations took place recently. It is too soon to judge whether they have had an effect on criminal activities in the province. It is unclear whether the increased police activity is due to the Governor or to Provincial Chief of Police Azim. The drive to improve security has been largely overshadowed by a battle of wills between Azim and the Governor, who is trying to remove Azim. Ekramuddin has been unsuccessful so far, reportedly because of Azim's connections in the Ministry of Interior. End Comment)

¶7. (SBU) The Governor also said that he has put the District Chiefs of Police on notice, informing them that if they are not able to "control the bad actors in their areas" he will personally "clean up" the security situation, district by district. (Note: The Governor alluded to his previous role as a Commander in Takhar province when making this assertion. End Note). Ekramuddin announced that if he sees any poppy growing in any district next year, the District Manager and Chief of Police will either have to destroy it or they will be fired. Warming up to his topic, the Governor also said that all Illegally Armed Groups will have to join the DIAG process. They will have no choice, he insisted; they must either submit, or they will have to bury their weapons and run away.

-----  
Interior Minister Visits, Assesses District Police

-----

18. (SBU) The Governor noted that Minister of Interior Moqbel had recently visited Pul-e Khumri District (an area he had not visited for several years) as part of a visit to the Northeast . While in Pul-e Khumri, the Governor noted that the Minister spoke to a gathering of district officials and elders on combating poppy growth and drug-trafficking and providing better security in the province. The Governor said that the Minister conveyed a message from the central government warning that any district officials who did not take decisive and effective action against drug activities, including growing poppy, would be fired.

19. (SBU) Ekramuddin noted that the Minister's message was timely. It supported his own struggle against narcotics and corruption, and it would help the police establish better security in Baghlan. The Governor noted that he wanted to improve the police throughout Baghlan, adding that many were former commanders and not necessarily qualified for their jobs. The Governor added that there were not enough police to provide adequate security in the districts. At Ekramuddin's request, Minister Moqbel sent a team to survey the needs of the Baghlan district police, including staffing requirements (there was a shortfall of over 200 reported), training, and equipment. The Governor said that the Minister planned to inform his colleagues in Kabul of the results.

-----

Governor Asks Attorney General For Help

-----

110. (SBU) At the Governor's request, Attorney General Sabit sent two officials to assist the Baghlan prosecutor with major land-grabbing disputes, particularly in Killagay

KABUL 00005809 003 OF 004

District, where Tajiks reportedly have been taking land previously held by absentee (and some returnee) Pashtuns. These disputes have been further complicated by an influx of Ismailis (Hazaras), also intent on obtaining land in the fertile area. Mediation efforts so far have not been successful, though active fighting has been mostly controlled. Ekramuddin was confident that the Baghlan prosecutor's office would be able to sort out these issues with the Attorney General's assistance. (Comment: The Governor appeared to think that the Minister of the Interior's needs assessment for the police, and the Attorney General's expected assistance would solve all of the police problems and land dispute issues. Ekramuddin's attitude may be wishful thinking, or he believes that he has done what he can and the onus now is on Kabul to deliver. End Comment.).

-----

Provincial "Development Plan" Completed

-----

111. (SBU) Ekramuddin proudly noted that the Provincial Government had completed a five-year "development plan", including priorities broken down by sector and district, in cooperation with the Provincial Government Line Directors, UNAMA, the PRT, and others. The plan consists of a list of projects the Governor would like to have completed in the province. He said that this list was given to donors and ministries in Kabul, and the Governor expressed hope that these efforts will result in a more comprehensive assistance program for Baghlan. The Governor noted that Baghlan has received less support from the international community than many other provinces. PRToff pointed out that a list of projects needed was not the same thing as a development plan. PRToff noted that a development plan should include a strategy for development, taking into account the relationships among the projects, how they would impact on one another, and which ones should be undertaken in what order to ultimately bring the greatest benefits to the most people. The Governor showed no interest in PRToff's

comments, and insisted the Provincial Development Plan was complete as presented in its current form.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

¶12. (SBU) Four months into his term as Governor of Baghlan Province, Ekramuddin appears to still be struggling for a firm grip on the province, and in particular, on the security challenges that it presents. Despite substantial experience as governor in two other northeast provinces (Takhar in 2002-2004 and Badakhshan in 2004-2005), and as Minister of Labor and Social Affairs for about 14 months in 2005-2006, Ekramuddin seems unable to find the key to managing the difficult ethnic and political balance that Baghlan presents.

He says all the right things about fighting poppy-growing, drug-trafficking, and corruption, as well as about supporting DIAG and ensuring security in the province, but there is little evidence that his efforts thus far have borne substantial fruit. He claims that if necessary, he will use his skills as a former jihadi commander to clean up the districts of Baghlan, but this threat rings hollow from a Governor who himself has been unable to travel to some districts where banditry and lawlessness are rife. He refused to consider that a 338-page list of projects, which he refers to as his "development plan", might need some additional work to turn it into a true development plan. Although Governor Ekramuddin appears sincerely interested in improving the security situation in Baghlan and in improving the life of the people there, his capacity and achievements so far are less than convincing. END COMMENT.

-----  
Biographic Notes  
-----

KABUL 00005809 004 OF 004

¶13. (SBU) Sayed Ekramuddin Masomi (aka Sayed Mohammed Ekramuddin) was born in 1953/4 to a wealthy Tajik family in the Ishkamish District of Takhar Province. He claims to have earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Kabul University, but this is not confirmed. Other sources indicate he has only a high school degree. Ekramuddin was a commander with the Northern Alliance, fighting against both the Soviets and the Taliban. He is a long-time member of the Jamiyat party and a is key figure within the party in Takhar province, serving as its head in the cities of Chal, Namak Ab, and Taloqan.

¶14. (SBU) Ekramuddin was President Rabbani's Deputy Finance Minister from 1991-1992, and continued as Finance Minister after Rabbani fell. During the last years of the Taliban, he was a front line commander in Chal and Ishkamish (Takhar province). However, he did not have a good relationship with Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, and acted independently in his districts. Nevertheless, he later established close ties with key Northern Alliance figures (Fahim, Qanooni, and Abdullah) and soon after the fall of the Taliban (February 2002) became Governor of Takhar for two years. He then served as Governor of Badakhshan for eight months before moving to Kabul to become Minister of Labor and Social Affairs for about 14 months, until March 2006. Ekramuddin was appointed Governor of Baghlan Province on July 31, 2006.

¶15. (SBU) Ekramuddin grew up with General Daoud and maintains a close friendship with him. He reportedly retains ties to Iran through a friendship with former Afghan Ambassador to Iran Dr. Ahmad, and Iranians reportedly used to visit him regularly. He also maintains contact Professor Rabbani, who reportedly provides him with financial support.  
NEUMANN